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# Book Reviews

Elephant Editors

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### BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORS' NOTE: Many books are reviewed and annotated in the *Elephant/Proboscidea Bibliography*. Here we include three reviews, one for a book not included in the references in this issue of *Elephant*, because it was published prior to 1987, and the other reviews are too long to be included in the annotations.

MARTIN, Esmond Bradley. (1985). *The Japanese ivory industry*. World Wildlife Fund, Japan, Tokyo, 52 pp., illustrated (paperback). A review by Gary H. Marchant and Faye D. Rosser — Elephant Research Foundation.

This is a concise, well-written history of one of the largest ivory markets in the world. Esmond Bradley Martin gives a history of ivory usage in Japan from the earliest times until 1979, yet he appears sympathetic to the Japanese and their concerns. Graphs and charts detail the amount and prices of ivory imports and exports from 1882-1979, the kinds of ivory (hard or soft), and the use of each type. The ivory industry, carvers' associations and uses of ivory in Japan are explained and illustrated. Over half of the ivory in Japan is used for making seals [known as "Hanko"], each being one of a kind (like a fingerprint) and are used instead of personal signatures in both personal and business use. As the Japanese market is an economic cause of poaching and is not going to fold up and go away, understanding Japanese concerns is essential to elephant conservation. ■

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BALFOUR, Daryl and BALFOUR, Sharma. (1997). *African elephants: a celebration of majesty*. Struik Publisher (Pty) Ltd., Cape Town, 168 pp., illustrated, 200 + color photos [ISBN 1-86825-793-2]. Price (hard cover): approximately US \$25.00 (in Zimbabwe). A review by Joseph P. Dudley — 702 Fletcher Place, Rockville, Maryland 20851, USA

This is an excellent "coffee table" book for elephant specialists and non-specialists alike. Forewords by Iain Douglas-Hamilton, John Hanks, and Daphne Sheldrick, notable conservation and research individuals with much experience in elephant matters, constitute perhaps 20% of the entire text and provide generic position statements on several important issues concerning the management of wild and captive African elephants.

The organization of the book is novel, with 16 core chapters arranged as guidebook-style vignettes that highlight notable elephant populations of different regions and sites (e.g., Amboseli, Hwange, Kruger, Okavango, Ngorongoro, Samburu). A brief explanatory text accompanies each chapter with notes on landscape characteristics and features of special local interest, set off by a montage of uniformly excellent-to-spectacular color photographs from each site.

For me, the most interesting aspects of the book, and the reason I ultimately purchased the volume, were the discussions and text pertaining to the elephants of Addo Elephant National Park, South Africa. Female tusklessness has evidently become a fixed genetic trait

among the Addo elephants, due to founder effect [the derivation of a new population (e.g., in an isolated area) from a single individual or a limited number of immigrants] during the isolation and decimation of this population during the early part of this century. Douglas-Hamilton cites the tusklessness of the Addo population as an archetype for the potential effects of poaching-caused increases in tusklessness observed in recent years among many African elephant populations (cf. Jachmann *et al.*, 1995; Abe, 1996). Despite the focus of the text discussion on tusklessness in the Addo chapter, the elephants in the accompanying photos are predominantly tusked individuals, with only one tuskless cow clearly visible. The authors cite a known incidence of only three tusked females within a population of "about 170" elephants (the 1994 estimate was 212 elephants). I have been able to locate no other quantitative reference to the incidence of tusklessness in the Addo elephant population. Strangely enough, a multi-authored study of the comparative genetics of the Addo and Kruger populations published some years ago failed to mention the outstanding features of the Addo elephant phenotype (small tusks in males, tuskless females) relative to the celebrated huge tusks exhibited by some Kruger bulls (e.g., the Kruger "Magnificent Seven").

A section of uncertain merits entitled "Trampled by Tsokwane" follows the author's preface. The text chronicles a 1992 incident in which Daryl Balfour was injured in an elephant attack that he provoked by pushing his luck in assuming a threat charge by one of Kruger Park's largest tuskers (Tsokwane) was merely a "bluff". Having already given fair warning, when the author approached the bull on foot and disturbed him for the second time in an hour, the bull carried home the charge. As presented, this section is clearly attuned to the sensationalist tabloid "mighty white hunter — rogue elephant" genre and, in effect, glorifies rather than deprecates the author's role in evoking an unnecessary and unfortunate incident. The circumstances of the incident appear to belie the high moral tone assumed by the author in the preface, and the fact that this section constitutes perhaps 10% of the entire text alters the tone of the entire work. The elephant bull Tsokwane was subsequently destroyed in 1995 because of his [by then] history of aggression towards human beings. Unfortunately, such instances of human-provoked conflict are all too common within national parks around the globe, and not infrequently result in the unnecessary destruction of elephants, bears, bison and other large mammals labeled as 'problem animals' because they have responded in absolutely natural and entirely appropriate fashion to reckless or foolish human disturbance (cf. Danyliw and Loftus, 1997). The "Trampled" section perhaps can be considered instructive in this respect but given the focus and content of the remainder of the book, this section would be more appropriate as an appendix.

Taken overall, the book is a good value and contains some worthwhile text regarding scientific and management issues, accompanied by an outstanding collection of glossy color photographs. I highly recommend this volume, with certain reservations, given above.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Abe, E. (1996). Tusklessness among the Queen Elizabeth National Park elephants, Uganda. *Pachyderm*, 22:46-47.  
Danyliw, N. Q. and Loftus, M. (1997). Stupid park tricks. *U.S. News & World Report*, June 30, 1997:61-64.  
Jachmann, H., Berry, P. S. M., and Imae, H. (1995). Tusklessness in African elephants: a future trend. *African Journal of Ecology*, 33:230-235. ■

LAIR, Richard C. (1997). Gone astray: the care and management of the Asian elephant in domesticity. FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), Thailand, 300 pp., including 38 small-format color photos. RAP Publication 1997/16. ISBN 974-89472-3-8. Copies available from FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (c/o M. Kashio), Maliwan Mansion, 39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand. Fax: (662) 280-0445; e-mail address: <FAO-RAP@FIELD.FAO.ORG>. A review by Joseph P. Dudley — 702 Fletcher Place, Rockville, Maryland 20851, USA

This is an essential up-to-date reference for anyone involved with the status and management of captive elephant populations in Southeast Asia. The text summarizes the available information on present and historical captive elephant populations, interwoven with comments by the author on the cultural traditions of elephant management. The format is an expanded version of that followed in the IUCN/SSC Status Survey and Conservation Action Plans with summary chapters on topical matters bracketing a series of focal country-by-country profiles. A table of interviewee names and addresses serves as a useful “who’s-who-and-where” contact list for those involved in the conservation and management of Asian elephants. The bibliography is extensive but largely focused on popular and gray-literature publications.

This study does not appear to have fulfilled its potential, the result of idiosyncrasies introduced by the author in the execution of this work. The subject matter is not organized in a fashion which will be readily coherent to most readers. The author employs self-invented terminology which will ultimately confuse rather than enlighten most readers, particularly bureaucrats and those for whom English is not the primary language of culture and commerce. The text focus seems to itemize and drift, rather than integrate the economic development implications of various elephant- and mahout-focused management issues. Much of the text discussion regarding cultural distinctions among various elephant-handling cultures, while valuable in and of itself, appears tangential to the original purpose and focus of the study. The most serious flaw in this work is the lack of a concise policy-oriented abstract or “executive summary”, which effectively nullifies the usefulness of this study as a tool for promoting elephant-traction as an appropriate technology for rural development programs in forested regions of Southeast Asia (which I assume was the underlying agenda for the commissioning of this work by the FAO). The author rightly places great emphasis on the fact that the Asian elephant is not a truly domesticated species, in that captive populations have never been isolated or independent of gene flow from wild populations.

The systematic, selective breeding over multiple generations which is the hallmark of the domestication process has never been successfully implemented in captive elephant populations, and this serves as the author’s rationale for introducing the novel term “domesticity”. While perhaps justifiable in some senses, the systematic use of such invented terminology is more suited to a specialist genre and appears inappropriate to a document of this type. The author discusses the potential importance of the international trade in captive bulls in permitting gene flow among regional wild populations, a factor which the author identifies as having significant implications for the genetics and conservation biology of modern Asian elephant populations. In summary, GONE ASTRAY is a useful reference for specialists, who may have sufficient leisure or incentive to plow through the intricacies of the 278-page text. ■